DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 383 694 SP 036 037

AUTHOR Dilworth, Mary E.; Imig, David G.
TITLE Professional Teacher Development and the Reform Agenda. ERIC Digest.
INSTITUTION ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY Office of Educational Research and Improvement (ED), Washington, DC.
REPORT NO EDO-SP-94-1
PUB DATE Jun 95
CONTRACT RR93002015
NOTE 4p.
PUB TYPE Information Analyses - ERIC Clearinghouse Products (071)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Elementary Secondary Education; Higher Education; *Licensing Examinations (Professions); Partnerships in Education; *Professional Development; Professional Development Schools; *Schools of Education; *Teacher Certification; Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS ERIC Digests; National Board for Professional Teaching Standards; *National Goals; Professionalization of Teaching; *Reform Efforts

ABSTRACT

To transform and revitalize education and to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century, teacher education and professional development have been designated as one of the National Education Goals (added to the original six in 1994). The goal suggests that practicing teachers are key to the transformation of schools. This digest identifies schools of education, teacher licensing, and teacher certification as areas integrally tied to enhanced teaching and therefore essential to professional development. Emphasis is placed on forging new relationships between schools and schools of education and focusing attention on professional development and the establishment of new regulatory policies for licensing and relicensing teachers. It is also pointed out that the term "teacher certification" has recently come to have the same meaning in education as it does in other professions--a designation of advanced practice in a specialized area, based on a voluntary system of application and assessment. The conclusion is that professional development must promote teachers' continuous learning, integrating new knowledge about teaching and learning within the social contexts in which teaching takes place. (LL)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 383 694

PROFESSIONAL TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AND THE REFORM AGENDA

ERIC DIGEST June 1995

by

Mary E. Dilworth
and
David G. Imig

ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education
One Dupont Circle
Suite 610
Washington, DC 20036-1186

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SP 036 037

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ERIC DIGEST
JUNE 1995
EDO-SP 94 1

Professional Teacher Development and the Reform Agenda

Mary E. Dilworth and David G. Imig

A New National Education Goal

The designation of "teacher education and professional development" as one of the National Education Goals (added to the original six in mid-1994) is genuine recognition that well-prepared teachers are essential to educational reform efforts:

By the year 2000, the nation's teaching force will have access to programs for continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.

The goal suggests that practicing teachers are key to the transformation of schools and that in order for teachers to lead the reform efforts, they need to be offered expanded and enriched professional development experiences. Such experiences should be tied directly to the emerging student performance standards and be continuous, site-based, teacher-designed, and organizationally focused. Professional development programs with these characteristics have to be viewed as essential or core activities that are less vulnerable to budget cuts.

Professional development is an integral part of current efforts to transform and revitalize education. The promise of a high-quality education for all children is dependent not only on a total restructuring of schools, but also on the knowledge and commitment of practitioners to restructuring. As school reform proponents Ann Lieberman and Lynne Miller state, "for school restructuring to occur, a combination of factors must be present *at the same time* and *over time*—including leadership, a shared mission, school goals, necessary resources, the promotion of colleagueship, and the provision of professional growth opportunities for teachers" (Lieberman & Miller, 1990).

Challenges to Teachers

Although education reform initiatives offer great promise, researchers suggest that they also pose significant challenges to teachers as individuals and as members of a wider professional community. According to Judith Little (1993), "one test of teachers' professionaldevelopment is its capacity to equip teachers individually and collectively to act as shapers, promoters, and well-informed critics of reform" (p.130). At the same time, Little cautions against leveling full responsibility for implementing education reforms on teachers. She has identified five areas as being integrally tied to enhanced teaching and therefore essential to professional development: reforms in subject-matter teaching; equity for diverse student populations; changes in the nature, extent, and use of assessment; the social organization of schools; and the professionalization of teaching. Each suggests the need for teachers to gain new knowledge and enhanced skills.

Authors Mark Smylie and John Conyers (1991) contend that rapid changes in the characteristics, conditions, and learning needs of students will continue; that knowledge about teaching and learning will expand dramatically; and that schools will face ongoing pressures for accountability and reform. They conclude that "these conditions will create unprecedented demands for the development of teachers' knowledge and skills" (p. 12).

Teacher Professional Development as Reform

Schools of Education

In order to expand professional development and have it fulfill its promise of transforming teaching and learning, new relationships between schools and schools of education must be established. As teachers take greater responsibility for their own professional development and for the operation of their schools, they find less time and desire to pursue university instruction based in large measure on research. At the same time, faculty at colleges and universities find less access to the schools and to practitioners who validate new forms of pedagogy and practice. In this situation, neither party fully benefits from the knowledge of the other. Education school faculty, school district staff developers, and other providers of inservice experiences need to rethink their roles and relationships. Programs that develop or enhance the capacity of these providers are particularly important. Action research and professional development schools are among the emerging concepts that support collaborations among faculty, staff, and field-based practitioners.

Teacher Licensing

Not surprisingly, the policy community, in a reform posture, is currently focusing much attention on professional development and the establishment of new regulatory policies for licensing and relicensing teachers. Guided by emerging state content or subject-matter frameworks for students, state policymakers are seeking to align all facets of teacher development with these standards. Many states are currently:

- Restructuring the format for licenses, e.g., by developing initial or probationary licenses for the initial year(s) of teaching and reconsidering standards for advanced practice or specialized areas of practice.
- Sponsoring alternative providers of continuing education credits, including teacher organizations and for-profit enterprises.
- Developing or adopting performance-based licensure assessments (such as the new NTE "Praxis" examination) that accompany initial licensure or are used as part of relicensure based on subject-matter standards.
- Considering or establishing relationships between how graduates perform on licensure examinations and how teacher preparation programs are evaluated.
- Establishing or working with established teacher professional standards boards that participate in or control the licensure and relicensure function.

SP036037

ERIC CLEARINGHOUSE ON TEACHING AND TEACHER EDUCATION
American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education
One Dupont Circle • Suite 610 • Washington, DC 20036-1186 • (202) 293-2450

- Considering new forms of salary differentiation for teachers that correspond to new licensure formats.

- Considering or establishing linkages between the licensure process and national accreditation of teacher education. More than half of the states have established linkages between the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) and program approval; all states will have the option of linking NCATE with the state licensure system.

One of the major implications of these developments is a new perspective on the state's accountability function for the continuous performance of teachers. By requiring and supporting induction programs, states are implicitly recognizing that their licensure function means both public accountability and responsibility for support and improvement of teaching practice. The previously separate functions of assessment and professional development are being merged intoa new state role that establishes higher, more performance-related standards and takes responsibility for ensuring that teachers can meet the standards. This trend holds promises for increased collaboration among state departments of education, schools, and teacher preparation institutions. The new state role also raises potential concerns, such as conflict of interest in the assessment process and inequities in the licensure system resulting from the uneven conditions of schooling across different districts.

Teacher Certification

The term "teacher certification" has recently come to have the same meaning in education as it does in other professions—a designation of advanced practice in a specialized area, based on a voluntary system of application and assessment. Since the mid-1980s, a comprehensive national certification initiative for teaching has been operating with substantial funding from private and corporate foundations and the federal government. The National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which represents a reform mechanism that contributes to the continuing professional development of teachers, is developing a comprehensive system of national certification assessments that began operating in late 1994. The National Board, which draws membership and support from both major national teacher unions and a wide range of education constituents, has the potential to affect a broad range of issues through certification. These include:

- a nationally agreed-upon definition of advanced teaching practice in the individual disciplines and grade levels;

- state incentives for teachers to apply for certification, including differentiated pay scales;

- school district hiring practices that would recognize national certification status;

- equity in the distribution of nationally certified teachers across school districts within a state;

- differentiated staffing in schools to recognize distinct roles for certified teachers; and

- reciprocity arrangements across states to recognize the status of nationally certified teachers.

The individualized professional development process associated with National Board certification will likely have an impact on traditional preservice and inservice programs. States may use data on teacher performance on the certification assessments to make judgments about teacher preparation programs. The certification process may also trigger changes in K-12 schools as teachers align their instructional and assessment practices with professional standards. The National Staff Development Council's *Standards for Staff Development* (1994) offer additional guidance for teacher development and school change.

Conclusion

In the current climate of systemic reform, the professional development of teachers has taken on new prominence. There are a host of reasons for this new urgency, ultimately centering on the importance of the classroom teacher in promoting successful student learning. Without the continuous improvement of teaching (and of professional teachers), the reforms will fail. Professional development must serve the purpose of promoting teachers' continuous learning—of integrating new knowledge about teaching and learning within the social contexts in which teaching takes place.

References

References identified with an EJ or ED number have been abstracted and are in the ERIC database. Journal articles (EJ) should be available at most research libraries; most documents (ED) are available in microfiche collections at more than 700 locations. Documents can also be ordered through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service: (800) 443-ERIC.

Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (1990, June). Restructuring schools: What matters and what works. *Phi Delta Kappan, 71*(10), 759–764. EJ410181

Little, J. W. (1993). Teachers' professional development in a climate of education reform. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis, 15* (2), 129-151. EJ466295

National Staff Development Council. (1994). *Standards for staff development*. Oxford, OH: Author.

Smylie, M. A., & Conyers, J. G. (1991, Winter). Changing conceptions of teaching influence the future of staff development. *Journal of Staff Development, 12*(1), 12–16. EJ431936

This ERIC Digest was adapted from the article:

Dilworth, M. E., & Imig, D. G. (1995, Winter). Professional teacher development. *The ERIC Review, 3*(3), 5-11.

ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education
1-800-822-9229 ericsp@inet.ed.gov

Mary E. Dilworth, Director
Judy A. Beck, Associate Director
David G. Imig, Chief Executive Officer, AACTE

This Digest is in the public domain and may be reproduced.

OERI **This publication was prepared with funding from the Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U. S. Department of Education, under contract number RR93002015. The opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the positions or policies of OERI or the Department.**

ERIC **Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a nationwide information system initiated in 1966. It is funded by the U. S. Department of Education. ERIC is the largest and most frequently used education database in the world.**